

# THE CORRESPONDENT.

MAGNA EST VERITAS ET PREVALEBIT.

EDITED BY GEORGE HOUSTON.

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## CORRESPONDENCE.

### WATSON REFUTED.

#### LETTER XIII.

Was it consistent with a deity to punish the first pair, Adam and Eve, and all their progeny, for their attempt to know good from evil? We here find that the priests have made God expressly after their own image. God's selfishness prevented man eating of the other tree, which would make him live forever. *Queritur*, then, at what period of the world did the soul of man become immortal? Was it not till Jesus Christ came? And was this tree a type of him, as the bread and wine are at this day? It appears also, that it was not one, but two trees that were prohibited!

Ib. chap. xxxii. ver. 24. "And Jacob was left alone, and there wrestled a man with him, until the breaking of the day; (this shews the antiquity and high authority of sparring,) and when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh: (Mendoza like) and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him. And he said, let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, unless thou bless me. And he said unto him, what is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And he said, thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel; (which, in Chaldee, signifies seeing God;) for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed. (Or, as the Vulgate more correctly translates, for if thou hast been to oppose the lord, how much more shalt thou prevail against men.) And Jacob called the name of the place Penial: for I have seen God face to face." This passage requires no comment.

Exodus, chap. iii. ver. 4. "And when the lord saw that he (Moses) turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the bush, and said Moses, Moses. And he said, here am I." This is a pretty play at boopeep.

Ib. ver. 14. "And God said unto Moses, I am that I am; and he said, thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I am hath sent me unto you."

Divines hold this passage to be a great instance of sublimity!

Ib. ver. 21. "And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, and it shall come to pass, that when ye go away, ye shall not go empty, but every woman shall borrow of her neighbour, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and ye shall put them upon your

sons, and your daughters, and ye shall spoil the Egyptians."

Here the Jews made God after their own image; and the dealings of that nation in silver, gold, and clothes at this day, shew that they have not forgotten their God. It is not easy for divines to reconcile this with God's other precept in the eighth commandment.

Ib. chap. iv. ver. 24. "And it came to pass by the way in the inn, (by the way, were there inns then in Egypt?) that the lord met him (Moses) and sought to kill him! Then Zeporah took a large stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his feet."

This business of the circumcision is brought in rather by the head and the shoulders, and the cause of it is not quite clear; but it is very evident that the lord could not kill Moses.

Ib. chap. xxxii. ver. 27. "And he (Moses learning that the Jews had made a golden calf,) said unto them, (the sons of Levi, i. e. the priests,) thus saith the lord God of Israel, put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour; and the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses, and there fell of the people that day about three thousand."

Ib. chap. xxxiii. ver. 9. "And it came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle, and the lord (who was in the pillar) talked with Moses."

In this manner modern goddessess stop their carriages at shop-keepers' doors at this day.

Ib. ver. 20. "And he (God) said, thou canst not see my face, for there no man shall see me and live."

God must here have forgotten his dialogue with Adam and Eve, his wrestling with Jacob, and his conversations with Moses. In Numbers, chap. xii. ver. 6 and 8, he says, "Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I, the lord, will make myself known to him in a vision, and will speak to him in a dream," but, "with thee (Moses) will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches, and the similitude of the lord shall you behold."

Ib. chap. xxi. ver. 5. "And the people spoke against God, and against Moses, wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness, for there is no bread, neither is there any water, and our soul loatheth this light bread." No wonder the Jews tired of living upon manna without water, but the lord taught them not to grumble. "And the lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, and much people of Israel died." When God was tired of making his serpents bite the poor devils, he said unto Moses, "Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole, and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten when he looketh upon it shall live." This is below all the tricks of necromancers.

Ib. chap. xxv. "And the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And Israel joined himself into Baal-peor: and the anger of the lord was kindled against Israel. And the lord said unto Moses, take all the heads of the people, and hang them up before the lord against the sun, that the fierce anger of the lord may be turned away from Israel. And Moses said unto the judges, slay every one of these men who were joined unto Baal-peor. And behold one of the children

of Israel came, and brought unto his brethren a Midianitish woman, in the sight of Moses, &c. And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose from among the congregation, and took a javelin in his hand; and he went after the man of Israel into the tent, and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her belly, so the plague was stopped from the children of Israel, and these that died in the plague were 24,000." As a reward for this, the lord gave Phinehas the everlasting priesthood, "because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel."

Ib. chap. xxvi. Dathan, Korah, and Abiram strove against Moses and Aaron, and the earth swallowed them up, and the fire devoured 250 men.

Ib. chap. xxxi. ver. 16, there was a plague among the congregation of the lord, on account of the trespass against the lord, when he ordered thus, "Now, therefore, kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman that hath known man by lying with him; but all the women children that hath not known man by lying with him, keep for yourselves." For the observation on this passage, I refer my reader to Bishop Watson, and the former part of this work.

The following ought to be the fate of all idolatrous people, and has been happily practised in the discoveries made by most European nations. Deuteronomy, chap. xiii. ver. 15. Thou shalt surely smite the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, destroying it utterly, and all that is therein, and the cattle thereof, with the edge of the sword."

Joshua, chap. vi. v. 21. "And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, (Jericho,) both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword. And they burnt the city with fire, and all that was therein: only the silver, and the gold, and the vessels of brass, and of iron; they put it into the treasury of the house of the lord."

Chap. x. Joshua being attacked by five kings, and they having taken shelter in a cave, he caused great stones to be rolled to the mouth of the cave, till he followed and destroyed the people, then he ordered the five kings to be brought out from the cave, "And it came to pass that when they brought out those five kings unto Joshua, that Joshua called for all the men in Israel, and said unto the men of war, come near, put your feet upon the necks of these kings, and they came near and put their feet upon the necks of them. And afterwards Joshua smote them, and slew them, Joshua took Makdekah, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and the king thereof he utterly destroyed, them, and all the souls that were therein; he let none remain." And so he did in all to 31 kings, as related in this and the following chapters, and all this by the express command of God, who made the sun and the moon both stand still to witness these unprovoked atrocities. But this was just; God having given that country to his chosen people the Jews, as in latter times his vicegerent the pope, gave America to the Portuguese and Spaniards, who, Joshua-like, exterminated the kings and people, because they were not Christians. This, as you say, serves the general scheme of God's benevolence towards mankind.

Judges, chap. i. ver. 4. And the lord having delivered the Canaanites and the Perizzites into the hands of Judah, "They slew of them in Bezek 1,000 men. But Adonibezek fled, and they pursued after him, and caught him, and cut off his thumbs, and his great toes." Ib. ver. 19. "And the lord was with Judah, and he drove out the inhabitants of the mountain, but *could not* drive out the inhabitants of the valley!" Why? "Because they had chariots of iron." Chap. iv. recounts the manner in which Deborah and Barak delivered Israel from Jabin and Sisera. Ver. 21. Then Jael, Heber's wife, (to whose tent Sisera had fled,) took a nail of the tent, and a hammer in her hand, and went softly unto him, and smote the nail into his temples, and fastened it into the ground, (*a goodly nail,*) for he was fast asleep and weary, so he died." Chap. v. contains the *beautiful* song of Deborah and Barak, which I particularly request my reader to peruse, as a finished piece of scripture praise of good works. Chap. xxi. relates, that the Israelites having sworn not to give their daughters to the Benjamites, and the inhabitants Jabesh-gilead not having come up to Minzeh, "the congregation sent 12,000 men of the valiantest, and commanded them, saying, go and smite the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead with the edge of the sword, with the women and the children: utterly destroy every male, and every woman that hath lain by man :" but, having "found 400 young virgins that had known no man by lying with any male," they gave them to the sons of Benjamin, "and yet so they sufficed them not." So as they had sworn not to give them wives of their own daughters, "therefore, they commanded the children of Benjamin, saying, go and lie in wait in the vineyards, and see, and behold, if the daughters of Shiloh come out to dance in dances, then come ye out of the vineyards, and catch you every man his wife."

First Samuel, chap. vi. The ark of the lord having been among the Philistines seven months, they, unwilling to send it back empty, asked the priests and diviners, what they should send in it as a trespass offering? "they answered, five golden emerods, and five golden mice—and ye shall give glory unto the God of Israel—and make a new cart, and take two milch kine, and take the ark of the lord and lay it in on the cart ;" and they did so, " and they of Beth-shemesh lifted up their eyes, and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see it—and the men of Beth-shemesh offered burnt-offerings, and sacrificed sacrifices the same day unto the lord—and he smote the men of Beth-shemesh, because they had looked unto the ark of the lord, even he smote of the people fifty thousand and three score and ten men." Gracious God! Blessed Jews!

Second Samuel, chap. xxiv. ver. 1. "And the indignation of the lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, go number Israel and Judah." (In first Chronicles, chap. xxi. ver. 1, it stated, " and *Satan* stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel.") And having thus instigated David to what is good policy in a king, God, of his infinite mercy, said unto David by his prophet Gad, David's seer, (an officer of the household in those days,) "I offer thee three things: shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land, or wilt thou flee three months before thine enemies, or that there be three days pestilence in thy land?" And David having chosen the

latter, "the lord sent a pestilence upon Israel, and there died of the people 70,000 men ;" but the lord is ever merciful, for, "when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the lord repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the people, it is enough, stay thou thine hand." *Deliriant reges plectuntur Achivi.*

1 Kings, chap. ii. David being upon his death-bed, having made peace with God, and purified his heart, called Solomon to him and gave him his last charge. As to Joab, the son of Zeruiah, he said, "do according to thy wisdom, and let not his hoar head go down to the grave in peace—and behold thou hast with thee Shimei the sons of Gera, which cursed me, but he came down to meet me at Jordan, and I sware to him by the lord, saying, I will not put thee to death by the sword ; now, therefore, (*proceeds the man after God's own heart,*) hold him not guiltless ; for thou art a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him, but his hoar head bring thou down to the grave with blood." Solomon having succeeded his father, the first act of his reign was to put to death his brother Adonijah ; but, 1 Kings, chap. xi. v. 4, "Solomon's heart was not perfect with the lord his God, as was the heart of David his father, for it came to pass, that when he was old, his wives turned his heart after other gods."

But why go through such barbarous details ? All along we find imprecations against those who despise the prophets, and praises lavished upon murderers, traitors and assassins. This is the people "selected by the wisdom of God, that they might witness to the whole world in successive ages his existence and attributes, that they might be an instrument of subverting idolatry, of declaring the name of the God of Israel throughout the whole earth ;" a people, who "are to be witnesses of the existence, and of the moral government of God."—This is the old testament, which you presume to say afforded matter for the laws of Solon, and a foundation for the philosophy of Plato,—which has been admired and venerated for its piety, sublimity, its veracity ; by all who *are able to read and understand it !!!* This is the God who maketh the sun to rise on the evil and on the good, who is all perfection, all wise, and all powerful, and whose mercy is above all his other attributes.

#### RELIGIOUS PERSECUTIONS.

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Having drawn a feeble picture of the consequence, let us examine the cause, and see if there be the least reason or justice for the foundation of this system of madness, which is not only the disgrace but the destruction of mankind. Attaching myself then to no particular system, but as a child of nature examining all, I must draw my reflections and arguments not so much from the received opinions of this or that particular system or doctrine, as from plain reasoning, morality, and justice. Mankind led away by a fallacy of reasoning, or blindly duped by a bigoted education, have attached themselves to principles, without weighing their merits in the scale of justice ; hoodwinked by those whose interest

it was to keep them ignorant, that they may enjoy the tenth of their possessions, and led on by primers, to whom those have acted as satellites, they have become the instruments of their own misery, dependence and destruction.

As a proof of my assertions, let us fix on any particular sect of christians, and examine the motive which has led them to persecution; shall we not find them firmly believing that the only method to attain heaven is by using a particular form of worship, wearing clothes of a particular color and make, believing a doctrine laid down by their founder, and being firmly persuaded by faith, that certain texts or portions of scripture convey a particular meeting which rivet their belief to that doctrine; that God almighty has fixed one invariable law or system, in which he chooses to be worshipped; that he condemns those who do not follow that system; and that they are in possession of that immediate doctrine which it has pleased him to adopt. Hence they consider those who differ from them as enemies to the deity, infidels and heretics; and as they feel a pleasure to punish their own enemies or those of their friends, so they consider the deity pleased with their hatred or punishment of those who differ from them.

"It is for the glory of God, it is for the benefit of his holy church," cried the destroyers of the Hugonots, with their poignards drenched in human gore, on St. Bartholomew's day. "Thou hast polluted the holy church of Christ by thy idolatry, thou art a believer in the real presence, and a follower of the whore of Babylon, therefore I am the instrument of Christ in exterminating thee from the face of the earth," cries a mad-brained puritan or reforming protestant. In short, each sect, considering themselves the favored people of heaven, confident of the justice of their opinions, and bigoted to their belief, suppose it would be displeasing to the great author of nature to take to their bosoms as a friend the man who, differing from them in opinion, they consider as going headlong to perdition.

Vain, childish notion of an infatuated brain! Hast thou examined the system of nature? Hast thou marked the progress of the heavens, or watched the movements of the earth? In what part of the great stupendous whole dost thou perceive the least partiality? what proof (but in thy intoxicated brain) canst thou produce in nature that the deity has marked thee as the elect? Does not the sun bless with its rays the land tilled by him thou callest an unbeliever? Do not the heavens water it with its showers, and is not its produce, if cultivated with industry, equal to thine own? Is not himself and children happy, provided their actions are marked by morality? Does not every blessing this world can produce shower on their dwelling, if industry be their care, and truth and justice their guide?

If, then, the deity in this world treats them equal to thyself, what proof can thy vanity produce to suppose they will not be equally favored in the next? Go, then, presumptuous being, and in the littleness of thine own heart sink into nothing!

But you will answer, God permits them to prosper in this world, but reserves his punishments for the next. What proofs have you that they are in error? for it is only to the error in opinion I allude, and not the

actions. Our scripture, you will answer, proves that we are right and they are wrong. Do not they believe and follow the same scripture, and produce it as a proof of their belief and your condemnation? Have not each of you written thousands of volumes in defence of your particular belief, drawn from those same scriptures? But, you will reply, we have particular sensations and inward feelings of happiness, which they enjoy not. Converse with your opponents, and they will declare they have the same inward sensations.

Where, then, is your proof of their punishment in the world to come? Can you suppose, for a moment, if the deity, who, by his fore-knowledge, saw the turn of mind they would take, would first create them, give them every enjoyment in this world, and afterwards damn them for their belief or opinions? But what is this belief or opinion for which you are so zealous? Is it not the result of the contemplation and examination of any given subject? Can we believe any subject to convey any other meaning than it has impressed our senses with; and is not this impression the result of an examination? Has not nature implanted in man a certain faculty superior to the brute creation, which we term reason, as an helm to guide and steer our conduct by? And is not our belief or disbelief in any subject in consequence of the impression it has made on our senses? Can we possibly view the things in any other light than it appears to our senses? Present any given subject, in which you cannot prove ocular demonstration, for the consideration of a member or each sect of christians, and see if you can find three agree on one point. Take a given text of scripture, and require an explanation from the same men, you will still find them differ. Ask them if it really appears to their understanding as they express themselves; they will instantly lay their hands on their hearts, and declare in the most solemn manner, in the affirmative: nay, on a religious subject, risk their lives in its defence. All those may be wrong, at least only one can be right in his opinion, and yet the result proceeds from the purest motives of conscious justice.

Can man, then, from those facts commit a fault in judging erroneously? If God has endowed us with reason to judge for ourselves, and we exert that reason to the best of our power, and follow that which appears to us right, where is the crime? But you will exclaim, of ourselves we can do nothing; we are the instruments of God, therefore must wait his call to salvation. Are we not likewise the children of God? And do you not declare his greatest attributes are justice, goodness, and mercy, with a fore-knowledge of what is to happen? And is it not your opinion, that he formed our body, and infused into it a living soul? If, then, of ourselves we can do nothing, and it does not please the deity to shower this spiritual gift on our heads, can we be blamed, consistent with justice or mercy, for not enjoying it? What would you think of that father who would cruelly beat his child for not reading the Lord's prayer, when he had never taught him his letters?

You will reply, there is but one mode of salvation, it is necessary to find that out, and rest on faith. Where is the man who has ever examined every mode of worship? Or who is he that has ever lived long enough to weigh the merits and demerits of the whole? What unerring mark does it possess to find it by? Or where is the creed that flashes

such conviction on the mind as to prove at once its authenticity? What indisputable authority have the believers of the trinity any more than the unitarians? Or what positive proof has either, any more than the followers of Confucius? If, then, all have the same claim to pre-eminence, if all follow that mode which appears to them the best, and have the same proofs to produce, what right has one to condemn the other?

To be continued.

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Mr. Houston—The following article is an extract from a letter in answer to one received from my father-in-law, on the subject of my wife's religious beliefs. If it is considered worthy, you are permitted to insert it in your useful and interesting paper:

CATO.

Dear sir;—The motives which urge me in addressing you are pure and honorable; they are not actuated by pride of opinion, enthusiastic notions of self consistency, love of converting others to my opinion, or a wish to *compel* others to abandon honest principles and accept mine as the standard of truth. God forbid that ever such ungenerous feelings or wishes should be known to exist in my bosom. \* \* \* \* \* You tell us to attend regularly to church, and permit Mr. —— to controul our religious opinions! Never; never will I abandon the right of using my own judgment in matters of opinion or business. What, renounce the brightest ornament of human nature! place the government of my mind into the keeping of a man who is placed by nature upon the same footing with myself? If man is not allowed to have the free exercise of his own judgment, what is the unhappy result? The history of the whole world will afford an affecting but correct answer; but more particularly Spain, Portugal, and England. Is Mr. —— a being more gifted, that he should govern the opinions of others? Is he not as much subject to error as other men? Certainly he is; his privileges extend no farther than mine; he is allowed to reason, and draw inferences as best suits his taste and interest; but beyond that he has no right to controul. Where one man, or set of men, hold themselves up, or are held up, as the only true source or fountain of knowledge, the whole dark catalogue of human evils follow in train, as the natural effect of a natural cause; ignorance first, superstition then, and their proscriptions, usurpations, hatred, persecution, crime, and every species of injustice. Again, you argue that a change in the religious opinions of my wife, would be productive of the most unhappy consequences—the destruction of all her fondest hopes of future felicity. My little knowledge of the construction of the human affections, would lead me to think differently. Our feelings, or minds, are so framed as to receive pleasure by the performance of good actions; by which I mean mental as well as physical actions; and are made happy when, by a change of sentiments or opinions, we are led to think we have escaped from ignorance and error, and arrived at truth and knowledge. The *idea*, perhaps, of a change, may carry with it unpleasant sensations; but the *act* itself will amply compensate for all former uneasiness. A deliverance from the shackles of superstitious error, produces sensations far more ennobling and felicitous than

can be derived from the fondest hopes founded on error ; the mind becomes enlightened, and its views more liberal and extended ; truth, one of the brightest embellishments of the human character, then stands forth arrayed in all its dignity and loveliness.

You also mentioned that our opinions ought to be governed by the common sentiment. All men are created equal with regard to the formation of opinions ; by nature they are allowed the free exercise of their own judgments ; equality in investigating, considering, and determining upon all subjects. We should not adopt opinions merely because they are prevalent ; if the error is general so much the greater should be the exertion to destroy it. If, through ignorance, or by some blind fanaticism, the generality of mankind has been deceived into error, must we, for the sake of popularity, join in the concert of deception, and let the honest sentiment of our own minds remain lost and inactive ? If the opinions of mankind are to remain fixed, when their only claims to belief are antiquity and universality, through fear of encountering opposition, or of being unpopular, what advance or improvement could we expect in knowledge of any kind ? Destroy the liberty of thought and you retard the progress of knowledge ; encourage investigation and enterprise and a new era arises ; knowledge of all kinds advances with rapid strides, and man becomes a new creature ; from superstition and ignorance he rises to a sphere which his noble construction destines him to fill ; great, not in himself, but in what he has made himself to be ; it pours a gladness through his heart which ignorance never did, or never can produce ; it elevates him to a station from which he looks upon the vast and noble works of nature with a mind as extensive as the objects of his survey.

This is an age of enterprise and investigation ; and consequently an age of liberality in thought and expression. It is the duty of every man, in every age, who discovers an error in mechanics, science, philosophy, ethics, or religion, even if he should have to fight the whole world, and convince man against his will ; it is his duty, I repeat, to strenuously expose and oppose it, till he finds it destroyed, and truth established in its stead ; this is the only means by which truth can prevail over error. Man, placed in certain situations, is superstitious and bigoted ; but let him enjoy the full extent of his natural rights, and have the full command of all his abilities, and he is a being as much superior to men of the same natural gifts, but fewer advantages, as the latter are superior to common brutes. Let every man follow the course which his feelings, his nature, and his taste, best qualify him to follow. Let Columbus be a navigator, and Copernicus an astronomer ; here are two illustrious and meritorious characters—Columbus, in advocating the existence of a western continent, had to combat the whole host of Spanish inquisitors ; than whom there was not a more diabolical set of men on earth. What had been the consequences if he had sat down the pliant tool to popular opinion, and permitted his own superior judgment to be overruled and lost by popular prejudice, and himself thrown aside as visionary and paradoxical ? Copernicus had to oppose the whole world in his theory of the solar system ; but he fought against error, and triumphed by truth ; and has received a crown of glory equal to the persecution of his enemies.

Let this, then, be an established fact, a rule by which to be guided and governed, that enterprise and free investigation are the only sources of truth and knowledge. Yours respectfully,

**NEW-YORK, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 1828.**

After an absence of two months, Mr. Offen has returned to this city. He has much interesting information to communicate as to the advancement of liberal principles; and we expect, when he has recovered from the fatigues of his journey, and his avocations will permit, to be furnished with the particulars, which we will publish for the gratification of our readers.

Nothing, it appears, ever alarmed the priesthood so much as the fearless manner in which he exposed their deceptions, and advocated the cause of truth; and had we no other way of judging of the effect this has produced, than by their own journals, the disponding tone which they now assume, and the unparalleled efforts they are making to excite an interest in their favor, would be sufficient to demonstrate their desperate condition, and shew their fearful forbodings. The following extract, which we copy from the Utica "Western Recorder," of the 11th inst., we merely give as a specimen of the numerous jeremiads that are daily sent forth in that pious paper:

"Revival notices are becoming very scarce in the journals of the evangelical denominations of this country; and the fact ought not for a moment to be disguised. Alarming as the circumstance is, it ought to be told at every concert of prayer, rehearsal, in every christian family, and carried into every chamber of secret devotion. It appears, also, in some sections of the country, to be a time of great rebuke and blasphemy. The hands of christians and christian ministers are hanging down; and the prayers of the church, it is to be feared, are doing very little towards staying them up. Let these circumstances be told, till christians will *feel* and pour out their hearts to the God of heaven. Yet, if they are not in earnest, if they are worldly or wise in their own eyes, if in any way they have begun to regard iniquity in their hearts, the lord will not hear their prayers. Is not this a time that calls for deep heart searching? Christian reader, the question is put to you—Do you *love* the cause of Zion? Then what are you doing to promote it? Are you prevailing before the mercy seat?—The God of Zion is unchangeable. His ear is ever open."

Our *tracts*, also, continue to give great uneasiness to the fraternity in the west. One of them, says a correspondent, "took four tracts into the pulpit, and told the congregation that they were left at his door; he told them not to read them as they valued their immortal souls. He said that those engaged in circulating them were enemies to God, to their country, and to their souls. Another priest informed his hearers, that he found some of the little intruders either on the stoop or in the post office almost every day."

So panic struck, indeed, have the priests become in consequence of the appearance of these little harbingers of truth, that they are not content with sounding the alarm from their pulpits, but utter their complaints and anathemas in the newspapers. The following is an amusing effort of this sort, on which comment is unnecessary:—

For the Western Recorder.

"*And the magicians did so with their enchantments.*"

Mr. Editor—When I see the devil, through his emissaries, for the purpose of building up his kingdom, making use of the same weapons that christians are using to build up the temple of Christ, I am constrained to believe that their weapons are such as will produce a mighty effect when faithfully wielded. The devil is fruitful in invention; his devices are of almost infinite variety; yet he hesitates not to take into his polluted hands the weapons of the christian's warfare, and thus attempt to paralyze, if not defeat, the christian's plans.

It is a fact well known to your readers, that for a long period the friends of the Redeemer have circulated divine truth through the medium of cheap tracts, and that of late a more vigorous and systematic effort has been made to extend their circulation. The devil at first contented himself with pouring ridicule and contempt upon the concern; but as these were made to bear with greater power upon the interests of his kingdom, he saw that fearful inroads were about to be made upon him.

And now come his magicians with their enchantments; and they are literally filling our land—not with frogs, as in the days of Moses—they are filling it with things which are still more loathsome to the moral sense, than the frogs were to the natural senses of the Egyptians; and these are coming up into our houses, and stores and shops. You have, Mr. Editor, once or twice alluded to this litter sent forth upon us by the abettors of Satan's cause. But my object in alluding to the subject at this time, is to call upon christians to be at their posts, and to watch. And, my christian brethren, while you are sleeping, the enemy is busily sowing tares.—While you are hesitating whether you shall give any thing in aid of the American tract society, these *infidel* tracts are polluting our land. While you are imagining that such *atheistical* publications are too gross and absurd, to produce any other effect than disgust and contempt in the minds of mankind, at this stream which has begun to flow through our country, thousands are now inhaling poisonous drafts; and among them, would you but open your eyes, you might discover some of your friends and perhaps some of your own children. Search well the secret corners of your houses and your shops, and you will find them. While avarice is urging you to withhold your small pittance in aid of the American Tract Society, the seeds of deism and moral death, which have been sown through the medium of these tracts, are springing up in the minds of thousands around you. And think you that your children shall escape? I tell you, nay. The only safeguard against them is divine truth, securing its hold upon the heart and affections; and instead of hesitating, you ought to be acting. Death and destruction are following in their train; and will you not do something to stop their ravages? Think not to stop their progress by affecting to despise them. The devil tried this weapon thoroughly, but found it insufficient to stop the march of truth; and will you take up weapons which he has long since thrown aside as useless? Then put your *hand* to the work, if you would see any thing done effectually. This is emphatically a day that calls for decisive action.

Awake then, christian brethren, from your slumbers, and no longer hesitate. The battle is waging, and you must fight and conquer, or sit still and be discomfited.

LUTHER.

### MISCELLANEOUS.

*Moral doctrines of Pythagoras, the Samian philosopher and moralist, who lived, according to the most orthodox computation, at least between five and six thousand years before Christ.*

Virtue is divided into two branches, private and public ; private virtue respects education, silence, sobriety, fortitude, prudence, and abstinence.

The powers of the mind are reason and passion, and when the latter is under the government of the former, virtue is the result.

Let young people be conducted into the best course of life, and habit will soon render it the most delightful.

Young people should be early inured to subjection, and they may ever afterwards find it easy to submit to the authority of reason.

A wise man will prepare himself for every thing which is not in his own power.

Do what you judge to be right, whatever others may think of you ; if you despise their praise, despise also their censure.

Silence is better than idle, useless words.

Sobriety is the strength of the soul, for it preserves reason unclouded by passion.

It is inconsistent with fortitude to relinquish the station appointed by the supreme Lord, before we obtain his permission.

No man ought to be esteemed free who has not the perfect command of himself.

That which is good and becoming is rather to be pursued than that which is pleasant.

The desire of superfluity is foolish, because it knows no limits. All animal pleasures should rather be postponed than enjoyed before their time, and should only be enjoyed according to nature and sobriety.

Wisdom and virtue are our best guard and defence ; every other guard is weak and unstable.

Much forethought is necessary for the maintenance of children.

To serve passions is more grievous than to serve tyrants.

In all thy words and actions let the strictest and most right justice be uppermost, and made apparent to all.

*Concerning public virtue, he says :—*

Propriety and seasonableness are the first things to be regarded in our intercourse with the world.

In all society a due respect must be had for subordination.

Respect is due to a worthy stranger, sometimes even in preference to countrymen or relations.

**It is better that they who converse with you should respect you, than that they should fear you ; for respect produces admiration, but fear excites hatred.**

**Between friends the utmost care should be taken to avoid contention, which can only be done by shunning as much as possible all occasions for strife, resentment, and exercising mutual forbearance.**

**It is an evident proof of a good education, to be able to endure the want of it in others.**

**Reproof and correction are useful and becoming from the elder to the younger, especially when accompanied on the part of the reprobate with evident tokens of affection.**

**Mutual confidence is never for a moment to be interrupted between friends, whether in jest or earnest ; for nothing can heal the wounds which are made by deceit.**

**A friend must never be forsaken in adversity, nor for any infirmity in human nature, excepting only invincible obstinacy and moral depravity.**

**Before we abandon a friend we should endeavour by actions as well as words to reclaim him.**

**True friendship is a kind of union which is immortal.**

**The great design and object of all moral and virtuous precepts is to lead men to the imitation of God.**

**Since the deity directs all things, every good thing is to be sought for from him alone ; and nothing is to be done which is contrary to his pleasure.**

**While we are performing divine rites piety should be always uppermost in the mind, and no earthly thing engage the attention.**

**Oaths are in no case to be violated.**

**Next to God, the highest reverence is due to parents and legislators ; and the laws and customs of our country are to be religiously observed.**

**Bible style, &c.—**Take the bible in general, it is miserably deficient both in literature and morals. Its boasted moral code is very much inferior to the second part of Volney's Ruins, commonly called "The law of Nature." The "splendid and lofty ideas" in this book, appear as a diamond would if buried in a dunghill : its value almost diminished and its brilliancy totally concealed by the gross and obnoxious matter which surrounds it. As an individual, I can say that I have found the diamond in other cabinets of curiosities, and leave the dunghill to those whom prejudice or interest may induce to wallow in the filth which seems congenial to their depraved minds.

The poetry of the Hebrews has been too much praised. Its style is similar, but in a great degree inferior, as it regards poetical spirit, to that of Macpherson's Ossian. The beautiful and natural figures of the latter are as much superior to the unnatural allusions and ridiculous tropes of the former, as pure metal is to dross. Blair, Kirk, White, and others have lavishly applauded bible beauties ; and although their learning is unquestionable, their philosophy is much to be doubted. White was an enthusiast in religion, and would "forego all literary fame, and lay his

heart down at the foot of the cross." He fell a victim, at an early age, to the study of Latin, Greek, logarithms, and religion, in St. John's college, Cambridge.

The book of Job is held forth as a fine piece of writing, partaking of the nature of a drama. I admit that it is superior to the rest of the bible, and does not appear to be a Hebrew work, as it is entirely different in style and character to any of the Hebrew writings. It is a very ancient work; the real author of it is unknown.

If a good system of morals could be found in the bible, it would be its best recommendation. But there is not a complete system of any kind in it, except, indeed, those systems of fraud, robbery, murder, prostitution, &c., to the end of that catalogue of evils, which mankind have suffered from, and been compelled to receive, on pains and penalties, as being sanctioned by a *divine authority*. In the novel of "Faublous" there is nothing to parallel scriptural indelicacy. It is a harmless book in comparison with the bible.

With regard to the diversity of *good* and *bad* in the bible, I would say that the *good* can be found in other works unalloyed by any thing that is objectionable; then why go to the bible for an adulterated article, which may be procured in a genuine state elsewhere? No one can wish me to travel through a desert in search of a flower which I can find in a garden, where great variety is at my will and choice; and where, as no bitter weeds spread their smothering leaves around them, preventing the genial rays of the morning sun from assisting their growth, of course they bloom and ripen to perfection, and we ourselves, for the time being, breath their fragrant atmosphere.

*Origin of the scriptures.*—The whole of authentic history teaches us that christianity rose in Asia Minor, in and about Antioch, spread itself early through Greece; through the whole of Europe after a period of about six hundred years, and predominated on the Mediterranean coasts of Asia and Africa until it was expelled by the more powerful fraud of Mahomet. It can only now be said to have a fair existence in Europe and America; and on these continents it is assaulted on all sides by the power of knowledge—knowledge that it (christianity) has no good foundation, and before this knowledge it must fall.

The books which form the new testament are a mere selection from a hundred others, as those in which the tale about Jesus Christ and the first preachers of christianity was most consistently told: and when it is seen that the present authorised books are full of discord in their statements; when it is known that these discordant tales have once been made to harmonize with each other by public edict, and that so late as the sixth or seventh century, under the reign of the emperor Anastasius; when it is known that no one of the more than hundred gospels and epistles, which circulated up to the commencement of the fourth century, had more authority than the others; and when it is known, that the present book called the new testament was formed and authorized to be received, upon the same or similar authority as the thirty-one articles of the

church of England were and are ordered to be received, so late as the fourth century, by a mere council of interested priests, with an ignorant tyrant of a Roman Emperor at their head, we may be assured that not only are these books void of all truth and good foundation, but supported for no other purpose than to preserve, on the part and for the advantage of powerful tyrants and robbers, a system of fraud and plunder upon the ignorant part of mankind, who by the aid of mystery and secrecy are easily imposed upon, and quietly spoiled of the profits of their labour.

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**Conscience.**—Conscience is no more than the effect of reasoning or passing ideas, either upon past scenes or upon present appearances. It is thus, when the ideas are caused by the recollection of past actions, that our sense of right and wrong, our reason, or conscience, either acquits or condemns it. It is a reasoning on the ideas then present; and it is the same thing, the same process, whether it be an action of our own, or that of another, on the probability or improbability of what we are told being true; or on the causes of the effect we see surround us.

Many men will pass through life without ever making any use of their reason, beyond the best method of getting money, and how to enjoy it, leaving all the rest unknown or unheeded. Others think it enough to do as they are ordered, and believe in religion, only because the priests requires it. But it is a different, a widely different case, with the philosophizing part of mankind; they reason on every subject that sends an idea to the mind; they are continually seeking after truth and exposing falsehoods; obtaining knowledge that therewith they may better the condition of themselves and their fellow men; protecting and teaching the practice of morality, as the only method calculated to make them a free and happy people; and exposing the errors of religion as being the most hostile to their welfare and improvement.

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**The Samanean doctrine.**—All the eastern writers agree in placing the birth of Beddou, 1027 years before Jesus Christ. The doctrine of this deity prevails over Japan, China, and Ceylon; it is the same as that of the Sectaries of Orpheus, of the Essentians, of the ancient Anchorets of Persia, and the whole eastern country. According to the sacred tenets of this religion, "God is incessantly rendering himself incarnate," but his greatest and most solemn incarnation was three thousand years ago, in the province of Cassimere, under the name of Fot or Beddou. Fot or Beddou was believed to have sprung from the right intercostal of a virgin of the royal blood, who when she became a mother did not the less continue to be a virgin: that the king of the country, uneasy at his birth, was desirous to put him to death, and caused all the males that were born at the same period to be massacred; that being saved by shepherds, he lived in the desert to the age of thirty years, at which time he opened his commission, preaching the doctrine of truth, and casting out devils; that he performed a multitude of the most astonishing miracles, spent his life in fasting and in the severest mortifications, and at his death bequeathed to his disciples the volume in which the principles of his religion are contained.

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